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ABSTRACT

Information about the Erie Urban Network School Project as it has been functioning for the past two years is provided in this report. Designed (1) to meet the needs of the inner city child by aiding the professional staff through inservice, and (2) to understand the child, the community, the educational techniques best suited for him, this project employs a humanistic approach in an effort to foster a positive self image, and a positive attitude toward learning and responsible behavior. Various program objectives are cited such as those designed to acquaint teachers with current and relevant educational studies and techniques, to develop in teachers the ability to prescribe a learning approach that is individualized, and to assist teacher competency in encouraging creativity. Several sections cover such topics as inservice sessions, parental involvement, mini-courses, bucket brigade, scheduling, college programs, discipline programs, interstate conferences, and the testing program. A list of participating project schools is also included. After evaluation of the project at two of the schools, project expansion to other public inner-city schools is recommended. Effective communication among the teachers, parents, and students involved in this Project is considered to (1) foster an improved attitude and (2) display social improvement of the students in their interaction with their teachers and peers. (Author/AM)

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ED118697

ERIE URBAN NETWORK SCHOOL PROJECT

ESEA TITLE III

UD 015735

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ERIE

BURTON — MT.CALVARY — PENN — JONES

TEACHING IN ERIE URBAN SCHOOLS

Close your eyes.
Just pretend.
You're in Erie Urban Schools.
Your mind must bend.

The children are black.
The children are white.
They're super eager
To get into a fight.

They fight for many reasons;
But mainly to survive.
They know no other way
To protect their hide.

They'll kick,or punch, or
Poke in the eye,
But, remember, what they want
Is to be your guy.

Give them some attention;
Touch their face.
Whatever, you must remember
To disregard race.

They look to you for love,
And comfort, and learning;
You are the only thing in their life
That isn't churning.

Do what you can;
Give all that you've got.
Don't let them forget that
In your heart they have a spot.

The day is over;
You sit and reflect.
Did I get anywhere?
Did I have any effect?

Don't measure your worth solely
In knowledge they've gained.
Measure it by how little or much
They have changed!

By Lynne Sabol

RATIONALE

The purpose of this booklet is to disseminate information about the Erie Urban Network School Project as it has been functioning in the School District of the City of Erie for the past two years. It is hoped initially to inform or further enlighten you about the goals of the Project, and how, in this situation, they were carried out to meet the needs of our Project school children in the best possible way. In the following pages, you will learn about the successes and failures, and where we intend to go from there. We are proud of the changes that have evolved in our schools, so if we have aroused your interest or a question, please write us for further information.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1970, the School District of the City of Erie began assessing and revamping their educational system in order to include current educational ideas and techniques and make them available to the teachers. Also the District saw a need to increase the amount of individualized instruction best to meet the needs of every student. By 1972, the individualized program had begun to affect all twenty-two elementary school curriculums.

The concepts outlined in the Erie Urban Network School Project were aligned to those set by the Erie City School District. These concepts were to develop humanistic approaches to teaching and to effect a change in classroom procedure so that the teacher could best implement pertinent educational ideas and techniques to each child. By spending more time per pupil, the teacher could better assess the child, and meet his needs within the structure of the classroom.

These concepts seemed most essential to the inner-city schools with a high percentage of student population from a low socio-economic status and a high black population. Therefore, the Burton Elementary School, with students K-4, and Mount Calvary Parochial School, with students 1-8, began as the target population serviced by this Project.

The Erie Urban Network School Project was funded in August, 1973 for $43,000 under a Title III E.S.E.A. Act. This project, one of eight Title III grants funded in Pennsylvania was a direct result of the

Title V Urban Education Project funded in 1968 to investigate the effectiveness of the Urban teacher.

The Erie Urban Network School Project was implemented for the purpose of meeting the needs of the inner-city school child by aiding the professional staff through inservice in the attempt to understand the child, the community, and the educational techniques best suited for the urban child. The project uses a humanistic approach in an effort to foster a positive self image, and a positive attitude toward learning and responsible behavior.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop humanistic approaches to teaching.
2. To view each child as an individual with different needs and abilities to learn.
3. To acquaint teachers with current and relevant educational studies and techniques.
4. To implement and perpetuate change in classroom procedures and instructional techniques based upon educational research and innovations.
5. To acquaint teachers with the three principal domains of man--the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor.
6. To develop in teachers the ability to prescribe a learning approach that will be individualized.
7. To assist teacher competency in encouraging creativity and positive attitudes in children.
8. To develop in teachers skills in diagnostic tecnhiques to identify individual student problems.
9. To develop in the teacher the ability to identify and then implement remedial techniques to reduce the learning disabilities of exceptional children.

10. To develop differentiated staffing patterns utilizing college student aides, pre-teachers, parents, and other community representatives, by which they will become aware of the personal and educational needs of the child.

After evaluation of the project at Burton and Mount Calvary, it was recommended that the project be expanded to other public inner-city schools. The Erie Urban Network School Project is currently focusing on three public schools--Burton, Jones and Penn, - and one non public school -- Mount Calvary. This represents an expansion of two new schools, -- Jones and Penn -- from the initial project year, 1973-74.

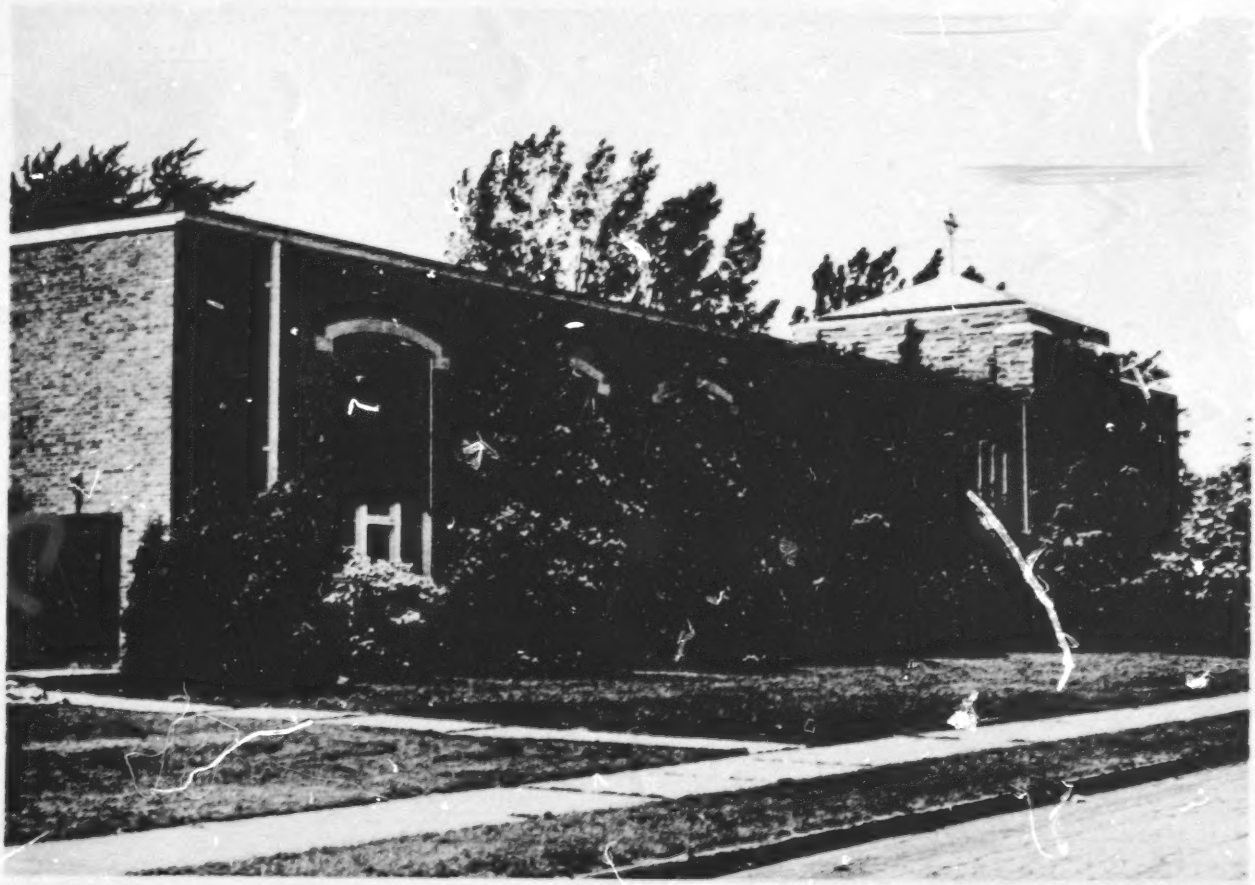
Meetings were held at the close of the 1973-74 school year at Jones and Penn to explain the Erie Urban Network School Project. After this meeting, the staffs of these two schools were asked if they would like to participate in this program. It was then agreed that the project would be beneficial to the teachers, children and parents of these inner-city schools. The 1974-75 school year began with in-service meetings involving either individual schools or the four schools collectively. These meetings were beneficial in acquainting the two new schools with the experiences of Burton and Mount Calvary project in the 1973-74 year.

BURTON

Burton School, a Kindergarten through Fourth grade learning center has an enrollment of 534 children. Burton services three separate housing projects, low income modular homes, and many privately owned homes. 60% of the enrollment live in public housing; 90% qualify for the Federal Hot Lunch program. The school is split evenly between blacks and whites. Burton has a staff of twenty-nine teachers and seven aides.

JONES

Jones School is a Kindergarten through Sixth grade learning center with a population of 230 students. 19% of these are black and 74% qualify for the Hot Lunch program. Most of the children live in single family dwellings. Some of the children are bussed from an attendance area where their school was converted to an adult education learning center. Jones School has a staff of 19 teachers and four aides. The Guidance Counselor, Art, Music and Math teachers also service Penn School.



MOUNT CALVARY

Mount Calvary is a First through Eighth grade Parochial School that houses approximately 180 children. 10% of the children live in public housing. There are four black students. Mount Calvary's staff consists of ten teachers and three aides.

PENN

Penn School is a Kindergarten through Sixth Grade center with a population of 22 blacks and 195 white children. Most of these children live in two-family dwellings. 70% qualify for the Federal Hot Lunch program. Penn School has a staff of sixteen teachers and four aides. The Guidance Counselor, Art, Music and Math teachers also service Jones School.

INSERVICE SESSIONS

The teachers, in order to meet the needs of the urban area children, felt the need for a more humanistic approach in the classroom. In order to accomplish this, it would require more information about the child's environment in the school, home, and community. The key phrase became "involvement" - the children, parents, and teachers as one complete unit. We approached this through a series of in-service meetings, the first of which concerned home visits.

During the first inservice meeting, Dr. Ted Urban, Erie City School Psychologist, guided the group discussion as to the format for home visitations. Small groups were formed to discuss ways in which to attain a more relaxed atmosphere during these home visitations. These same groups "role-played" various situations which might arise. From this we formed some guidelines to follow such as:

1. How does your child feel toward school?
2. What does your child do in his free time - interests, hobbies, etc.?
3. Does he have responsibilities at home?
4. How does he get along with others?
5. Does he have friends come in?
6. Would parents be interested in becoming involved with school projects?

As a follow up to home visitations, parents were invited to our next inservice to discuss their reactions to home visitations and to determine whether or not to continue this means of communication.

The outcome was very favorable as the parents reacted with great enthusiasm, so much so that it was decided to continue with home visits in the future.

Inservice number three dealt with effective use of teacher aides in the classroom. Mr. Dobbs, director of teacher aides, showed us a film and gave a talk on how we could best get "the most mileage" from our aides.

During our third inservice we also discussed in small group sessions what we had learned about our families, neighborhood, children, and ourselves. The question which now evolved was "Where do we go from here in parent-school involvement?"

The School District of the City of Erie Task Force came to our fourth inservice and presented information and practical applications in regard to the five learning principles used in the Model Project Individual School. These principles could be adapted to fit the need of our Erie Urban Network area. Listed below are the five learning principles.

The learning program is:

1. Designed to individualize learning around stated objectives and personalization of that learning program around a child's personal styles.

2. Organized around active learning which stresses initiative by students, inquiry approaches to problem, and concrete experience through the manipulation of materials.

3. Balanced in the three principal learning domains of man--the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the psychomotor domain.

4. A balance between the behavioral design for interaction

with learners. The behavioral design defines learning in performance objectives stressing stated levels of mastery that are expected. The learning program is individualized and personalized around these objectives taking into account the human uniqueness of each child.

5. (Place emphasis) upon a diagnostic-prescriptive role for the teacher with the children and a differentiated staffing pattern for staff organization.

On October 10, 1973, Mr. Libra and Mr. Hoffman co-conducted our sixth inservice dealing with behavioral objectives and industrial arts. It was divided into two alternating sessions. Mr. Hoffman proceeded to explain how industrial arts has a place in the elementary grades along with the academic subjects. After this meeting we realized that behavioral objectives are an essential and meaningful part of education. In addition to the discussion of Mager's Performance Oriented Objectives and the Levels of Objectives, each teacher formulated a list of his own objectives regarding his particular learning experiences.

Our next inservice meeting was similar, in that we had alternating sessions. These sessions concerned Math with Mr. Libra and Mini-Courses with the Task Force. During the math session, we discussed problem areas and methods of alleviating them. The Task Force presented various ideas and methods of conducting the mini-courses.

SAPA Science was the interest area for our next session. We took an active part because it was conducted as a workshop where we conducted our own experiments and learned by doing. Through this method we discovered why children in the elementary grades are finding this science program more interesting and meaningful. The other half

of this inservice was a large group discussion where the theme course in learning design was presented to us. Many sample modules and packets were distributed. Patterns for scheduling was also a big part of the agenda for this session.

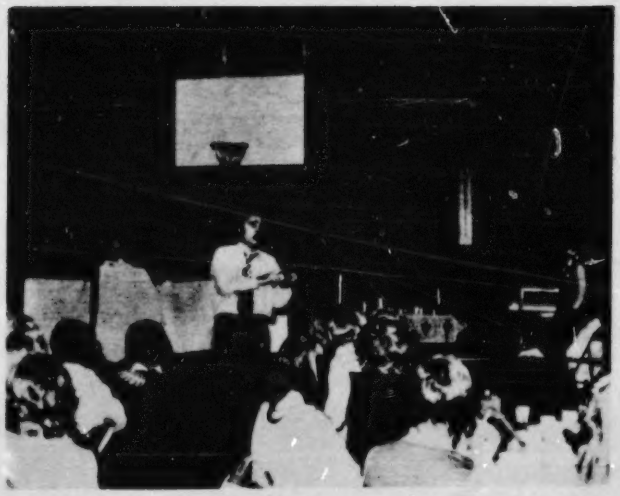
The next four inservice meetings pertained to Individualized Learning Through Packets and Learning Centers. Mrs. Earlley, a staff member of the reading department at Edinboro College, supplied us with endless ideas for packets and learning centers. Using these ideas along with our own, we constructed packets and learning centers for our use in the classroom. These proved to be very beneficial as children could work with them independently.

The following inservice meeting concerned Resources for Multi-Sensory Learning. This was presented by Sister Kathleen Cribbins, of Saint Benedict Academy. She brought with her many remedial methods for teaching language arts. One of her favorites was the Peabody Language Development Kit which she demonstrated for us.

The culmination of our first year's inservice activities were sessions on language arts at which we discussed the new language arts programs and the ways we could improve our techniques when using these programs. Following this meeting, the Task Force gave us the theory and application of modular instruction. Included in this session was a discussion on flexible grouping. An excellent means of stimulating an interest in books was given by Mrs. Sivulich of Mercyhurst College through her use of story-telling techniques.

Our next year's inservices were an extension of the various

interest areas the teachers felt were essential to their needs. One new content area was Dr. Glasser's "Open Ended Class Meeting" techniques. Six inservice hours were devoted to this topic. Consultants from New Castle, Pa., conducted sessions attended by teachers, parents, students, and School Board Directors.



Some of the other inservices concerned: The Metric System, Language Development, and Behavior Modification.

Consultants

Mr. Thomas Wiza	Behavior Modification
Dr. Elsie Earlley	Learning Stations and Packets
Dr. Ted Urban	Awareness and Understanding of Childs' Home Environment
Mrs. Patricia McGarrey	Bucket Brigade (inservice for parents)
Mrs. Corrine Halperin	Bucket Brigade (inservice for teachers)
Mr. Randy Davidson	Creative Expression
Mr. Joseph Martin Mr. Ronald Monaco	Schools Without Failure
Mrs. Sandy Sivulich	Library Usage and Storytelling
Mr. Peter Libra	SAPA Science, Metric System
Mrs. Kathy Carlisle	Language Development

Mr. James White	Behavior Modification
Mr. Dalhart Dobbs	Effective Use of Teacher Aides
Mr. Hoffman	Industrial Arts
Sister Kathleen Cribbins	Multi-Sensory Learning

HOME VISITS - PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

How best to educate a child? He is a product of all of the home, his environment, and many early influences which help mold his thinking processes and mode of behavior. When he is ready to enter school, his home background plays a major role in his adjustment to a school situation. Here at school he will be put to the test regarding behavior and readiness to absorb materials presented to him by his classroom teacher. Some youngsters make the transition with a minimum of difficulty; some need direction, prodding, and an understanding teacher; while still others find that their early training at home has not prepared them sufficiently for their experiences at school. Especially with this type of student, it is necessary for the home and the school to join in a cooperative effort and become involved with one another. The Erie Urban Network School Project grew out of this need to join the school and the home.

To help bridge the gap between home and school, the schools' personnel was guided into the home visitation program. The objectives for these home visits were as follows:

1. To provide detailed explanations of the Urban Network Project to individual families in an informal setting.

2. To increase the teacher's awareness and understanding of the child's home environment.

3. To establish rapport between home and school.

4. To elicit parent involvement in school activities.

5. To share opinions on various aspects of the program at project schools (i.e. scheduling, mini-courses, and discipline).

To initiate the home visit aspect of the program, an inservice was conducted under the direction of Dr. Ted Urban. The inservice consisted of small and large group activities designed to prepare the teachers for their future home visits. Through role playing, the teachers anticipated some of the situations they might encounter in the homes.

To help the school staffs of the Project, these guidelines were intended to be used as notes and as a means of preparing the teachers for their home visits:

HOME VISITATION GUIDELINES

1. How does your child react to school?
   Is he happy?
   What does he tell you about school?
   - things he doesn't like
   - things he would like to see done but is afraid to suggest to the teacher

   What would you like to see your children doing?

2. What does your child do in his free time?
   - interests
   - loner
   - friends

3. Does your child have any problems - do you suspect any - hearing, allergies, etc.?

4. Does your child have responsibilities?
   How does he react to them?
   Can he work alone?

5. How do you handle the problems you have with your children? (You may use your own examples to show that you are human and do make mistakes.)

6. Parent Involvement

Would they be interested in helping in the library or on field trips?

Would they be interested in sharing activities they do with their own children with others in school - sewing, cooking, art, carpentry, etc.?

What are their ideas of closed lunch programs?

Would they be interested in getting together with other parents to discuss children, the school, improvements?

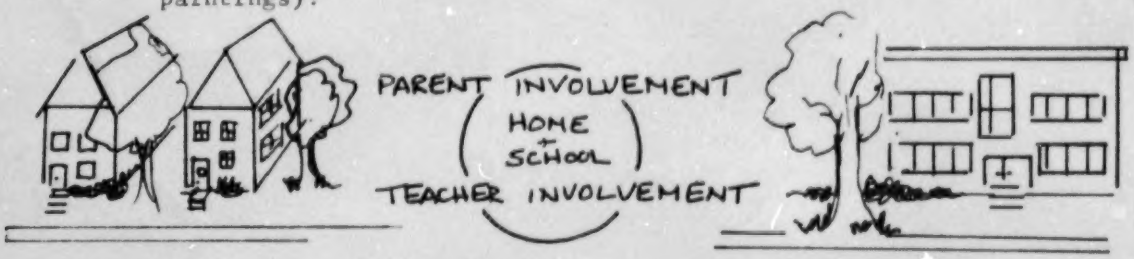
To make certain that the school staffs would make their visits to the homes more meaningful, ground work was established in the respective network schools with letters being sent to the parents of the philosophy and project goals. To maintain the personal interest in the project, telephone calls were made to parents to set up appointments at times convenient to them. In some instances, school personnel were faced with indifference and hostile attitudes from parents.

The visits to the homes were arranged to include other school personnel along with the classroom teacher whenever possible. In this way each was able to contribute whatever information was necessary to acquaint the parent with the child's progress and development in school. At the same time all could share in the parent's input helping each in his dealings with the child. An art teacher learned during one of her home visits about a special talent which one of her students pursued at home but had not displayed in school. At another visit the art teacher learned about the parents' active participation and interest in various art media which helped the teacher in dealing with the child's school interest.

At Mount Calvary, to encourage greater parental involvement, the

parents were given the option of having the teacher visit the home or having the parent visit the school. Their response was excellent. Because of the time restriction, certain families were visited at home while others were scheduled to visit the school at their convenience. As a result of the initial parental involvement at Mount Calvary, a number of parents were invited to participate in small group sessions in the second year program. Teachers, the counselor, and parents discussed questions such as:

How often must a parent check on the progress a pupil makes in school?
How can you teach children to become responsible?
What causes pupils to become frustrated in school and at home?
Why are some children hostile?
What are ways that parents can use to maintain communications with their children?
How would you deal with a pupil who is constantly disrupting the class?
What are some of the ways pupils should be punished if they do not conform to reasonable behavior?
What are some of the situations at home that affect a child's behavior?
How can children develop interests in the arts (music, plays, paintings)?



The sessions were planned as a means of implementing communication between the school and the home. Opinions and suggestions from the parents were encouraged and taken into consideration as a basis for future change. Some were introduced into the classroom by the

teacher participants; others were utilized by the counselor in his role with the students.

The attitude of the parents engaged in this activity was positive. An atmosphere of understanding of each other's role and how each was interrelated was very much in evidence. Since the groups were small and informal, participants soon relaxed and expressed themselves freely. A sense of humor served to smooth over the sensitive areas discussed, and the rapport which was demonstrated was most gratifying. Teachers, counselor, and parents appreciated the value of this activity and were sincerely interested in expanding the program to others by increasing the frequency of the meetings.

The visits proved very effective at all the project schools because the parents, including some fathers, were contacted at their convenience in their own homes where they enjoyed the advantage of being in familiar surroundings. Parents were proud to serve as hosts to staff members and their children delighted at seeing school personnel in their homes in a different role from the one viewed in the classroom. Topics which were not ordinarily discussed within the school environment were brought up in this informal meeting.

As a follow-up to the initial home visits, a general inservice meeting was held at the project schools. At this meeting the philosophy of humanizing education was expanded in a presentation given by school psychologists. Here the importance of the parents' involvement with the school was emphasized. Parents saw themselves being

included in school activities and being asked to contribute their talents, time and energy towards the overall humanization objective.

The reality of this objective became evident when parents began to volunteer their services in various school functions. The first of these was the need for talented parents to conduct mini-courses at the various project schools. They ranged from teaching Italian cooking, bowling, ceramics, stitchery, art crafts, graphic arts, to the more glamorous projects such as beauty culture, rocketry, dramatics and home building as a career related activity.

An innovative teaching technique which also required parental cooperation was the Bucket Brigade. Here the parents moved into the school to work with individual students in areas of remediation as prescribed by the classroom teacher. Many times parents found themselves with gadgets, cards, rulers, books and other aids in their buckets each of which had its purpose in stimulating the child's desire to learn.

The importance of the parent in this role cannot be over emphasized. Youngsters responded more openly to parents in the Bucket Brigade because the atmosphere was relaxed and informal.

The parents further contributed their services by acting as chaperones for in-school activities as well as offering the use of their cars to transport students to out-of-school activities. Plays and school programs found the parents in a supportive role working on costumes, helping during rehearsals, mimeographing programs, and

assisting the school staff in taking care of the many details connected with in-school and out-of-school projects.

The interest, enthusiasm, and cooperation of the parents in their involvement in the Erie Urban Network School Project has indeed stimulated a new growth in the urban child.

School attendance and participation in school related activities has been revitalized. Participation by students in extra-curricular activities has increased because of parental involvement. A more genuine interest in students' academic growth also has been evident with greater parental participation in Open House and Parent Conference Days than in the past. All of these serve to point the value of having bridged the gap between the school and the home and humanizing education so that a more positive attitude exists toward learning and responsible behavior.

Recommendations:

1. Encourage continued home visits. Arrange visits throughout the school year.
   a. Initial visits - early in school year
   b. Follow up visits - middle of school year
   c. Concluding visit - end of school year

2. Continue using the team approach for home visits - remedial reading and math teachers, speech, music and art teacher, school nurse and counselor, and L.D. teacher.

3. Arrange for use of a mini bus from the school district to provide expanded "mini-course" visits to:
   a. Historical landmarks
   b. Community agencies
   c. Cultural programs

4. Invite parents to join in faculty meetings.

5. In-service meetings to include involved parents to further:
   a. Mini-course participation
   b. Bucket Brigade participation
   c. Field trip participation
   d. Special project participation

6. Set up parent committee from project schools for:
   a. Dissemination of information - exchange of ideas
   b. Participation in inservice meetings
   c. Participation in inter-state conferences
   d. Participation in end of year evaluation

7. Involve parents in close-of-year ceremonies - graduation and issuance of certificates for project participation (invite all members of the family). Recognize parental participation and accomplishment.

MINI-COURSES

Introduction. The idea of mini-courses was introduced to the staffs of Burton and Mount Calvary during the first year of the Erie Urban Network Project. Our consultants were members of the Elementary Task Force of the School District of the city of Erie. They offered us theory and background on the presentation of mini-courses.

Mini-courses are short term learning experiences based on a limited number of learning objectives within a discipline, across disciplines, or within the interests of the teachers and the students. At this time, we also became aware of the general possiblilties of mini-courses, the various types that could be offered, and the proper way to structure our mini courses. We felt it was important to note that mini-courses would not be a free, fun-time period; but, that they would have structure, discipline, and educational value.

Objectives. Additional objectives would be:

A. To provide a practical application of teaching skills through experiences, rather than the basic techniques used in a classroom situation.

B. To capitalize on the talents of all personnel, rather than just the professional teaching staff. This would include aides, students, teachers, parents and available resource people from the community.

C. To provide supplemental and enrichment materials and activities.

D. To provide a more individualized approach to learning.

E. To encourage spontaneous creativity in the child.

F. To build new social relationships with peers, parents and teachers.

G. To provide an opportunity for successful experiences for each child thus fostering a positive self image.

Procedure for Organization. To initiate the mini-course program the faculty was assembled and ideas were presented to them. It was decided that the activities to be offered would be a matter of choice to the members of the faculty. Suggestions for these activities would then be drawn from other schools as well as from the student body. Each teacher, aide or parent would at this point decide what activity they would like to share with the children.

It was determined that mini-courses would be held on Friday afternoons for six consecutive weeks, one and one-half hours per week. Students were given a "sign up" sheet listing all the available mini-course activities and the names of the instructors offering these courses. They were allowed to list three choices in their order of preference. It was then the responsibility of the Project Leader and his committee to structure all of the 530 students into the mini-course of their choice and return the class lists to the thirty-four instructors.

Problems. T.G.I.F. day, with the exception of the afternoon mini-courses, is how the Burton staff felt for six weeks after we initiated our mini-courses.

Scheduling had created a problem as the children were given three choices and it was almost impossible to place everyone in his or her first choice. Many children did not like where they were placed and wanted to change. Some of the teachers were unhappy with the large numbers of students in their courses.

Ordering the necessary supplies became a little hectic. We had to secure our purchase orders and present them to the project leader before the supplies could be picked up. This often caused problems with getting the supplies to us on time.

As we launched our program we ran into numerous difficulties. Naturally our children were super-enthusiastic, and by the time Friday afternoon arrived they were close to exploding. With this enthusiasm we soon realized a need for teachers to patrol the halls to keep order and to see that everyone found their correct mini-course room.

We felt that the length of the sessions were too long. Six weeks with 1½ hours each Friday seemed unbearable. We decided the next session would be considerably shorter, not only in the number of weeks the course was offered, but also in the amount of time that would be allotted to each session.

We also ran into the problem of not enough help. We encouraged parents to participate but we received only minimal cooperation. In the second year more parents volunteered.

There were some teachers who did not wish to teach a mini-course and were against the idea from the beginning. This posed a problem as to what to do with the extra children and what would the teachers

do if they did not chose to teach a mini-course. It was decided that they would either keep their own classes or would be assigned to supervise children who chose not to participate in a mini-course.

After the first session we discussed the problems which had occurred and tried to come up with solutions to improve any future sessions.

Positive Aspects of Mini-Courses. The children perceived mini-courses as fun filled experiences. Through enjoyable activities, children anticipated coming to school. By participating in stimulating and motivating activities, the children gained valuable educational experiences. Because mini-courses have a "built-in" success factor, children with a poor self image and a feeling of failure have a chance to experience success and thus obtain a more positive feeling about themselves.

Through the use of mini-courses we also found a positive reinforcement for behavioral patterns. Children tended to improve their behavior in order to gain the privilege of attending mini-courses. This in turn provided a better social environment for all concerned.

Conclusions - Reinforcement Certificate. At the conclusion of each mini-course the participants were awarded a certificate of merit including their name, the name of their mini-course, the date completed, and the instructor's signature. This provided the child with a permanent reminder of his successful participation in the mini-course program. The product oriented courses also permitted the child to take his finished project home.

During the final mini-course session many teachers chose to include a treat or snack. This was used as an additional reinforcement for successful completion of the mini-course program.

Restructured Organization. Because of the problems mentioned previously, it was decided by committee that the mini courses would be restructured into two groups; K-2 grade grouping and a 3-4 grade grouping with alternating sessions. Mini-courses would then be held on a four week basis, one hour per week.

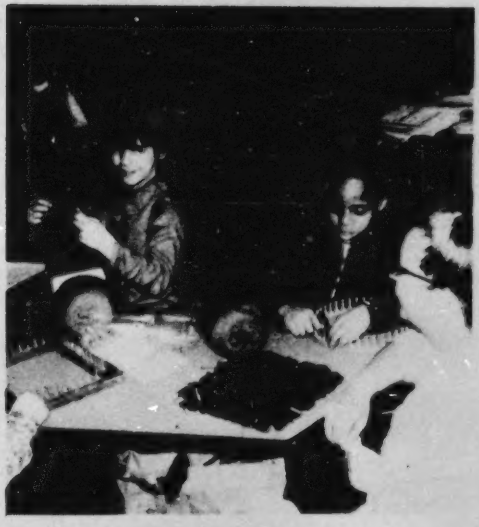
All specialists, aides and community volunteers would be available to teach both sessions, thus reducing the teacher-pupil ratio.

Because of the successful mini-course restructuring this design was implemented during the 1974-75 school year by all project schools. At least three mini-course sessions were held by each of the participating schools during the second year of the project. Parental participation during the second year increased substantially. All project staff participated in the teaching of mini-courses. A wider variety of mini-course selections were offered the second year to satisfy the desires and needs of the children.

Making Your Own Book
Photography
Tone Bell Choir
Painting Arts
Italian Cooking
Backgammon
Shake Hands with Your Community
Careers in Law
Creative Dramatics
Beginning Soanish
Fishing
Twirling and Marching
Typing
Kite Designing and Making Tin Can Stilts
Puppet Making

SAMPLE MINI-COURSES

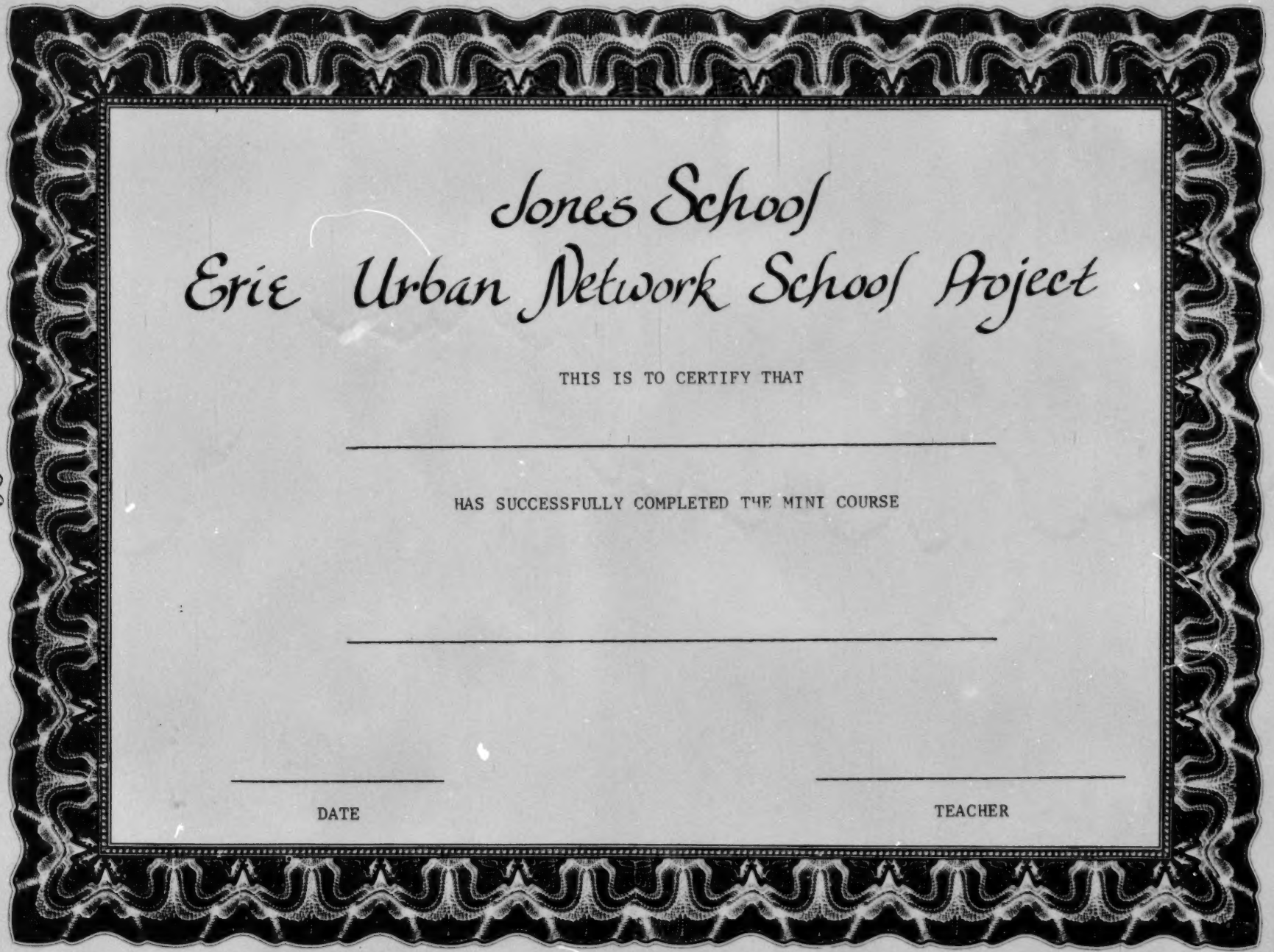
Knitting
Yoga for Young People
Beginning Piano
Beginning Sewing
Creative Arts
Student Council
Tumbling and Gymnastics
Decoupage
Bowling
Flower Arranging
Candle Making
Building Block Construction
Playing the Flute
Weaving
Indoor Games



FRIDAY AFTERNOON AT BURTON SCHOOL

It is a wonderful experience to walk through the halls of Burton School on Friday afternoon. As you glance out a north window, you can see several kites against a blue sky, and you wish you were out there with them. This is mini-course day and it is the time for third and fourth graders to be doing their fun things. Out a west window I can see boys tying branches or limbs together to construct something, and I don't even know what that course is called. As I stroll along the hall I can hear the sound of laughter and cheerful chatter. Colorful objects are being woven, sewn and pasted. The aroma of food cooking and cookies baking drifts up the stairs. As I try to find the source of this, I hear music, and then come upon a group of square dancers. All along the way I have seen child photographers hard at work. To see these smiling faces and hear their happy sounds, really makes it all so worthwhile.

A Casual Observer



Jones School
Erie Urban Network School Project

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

_____

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE MINI COURSE

_____

_____ _____

DATE TEACHER

This objective sheet was completed by all teachers of mini-courses and could be used as a lesson plan in case teachers were absent.

MINI-COURSES

Name of Activity _____

Instructor _____

Grade Level _____

Number of Students _____

Materials Needed _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Length of Activity _____ weeks

Main Objective _____

_____

_____

Weekly Activities: 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Evaluation: Printed Certificates will be issued to those children who satisfactorily fulfilled the objectives.

BUCKET BRIGADE

A one to one tutoring program entitled "Bucket Brigade" was initiated in the three public schools of the Erie Urban Network School Project. Because large classes prohibit teachers from giving individual instruction to children with learning problems, parent volunteers were solicited from their home schools. The prime objectives of this program were to strengthen the student's self image and to give him individual attention.

A two hour in-service training session was held for all interested parents to familiarize them with the "Bucket Brigade". The program included parent volunteers who could contribute at least two twenty-five minute sessions per week. An Erie School District Psychologist, familiar with the workings of the "Bucket Brigade", conducted this inservice session to demonstrate the use of and the construction of learning materials for the bucket. Activities and procedures were compiled in a manual

for the volunteers to follow.

Children in grades Kindergarten through Second were selected by the classroom teachers. They selected students who would receive the greatest benefit from this remedial program. An assessment of the child's learning problems was written by the teacher to be used as a guide in initial screening. Included in the initial testing were items such as: identify alphabet, print alphabet, alphabet sounds, alphabet blends, sight words, identify numbers, print numbers, subtracting, adding, dot to dot, copy memory and eye movement.

The parents met with the children in designated areas of the school. Initially the meetings were to establish a rapport between volunteer and student. The volunteer used the results of the "Bucket Brigade Survey Forms" and teacher comments to determine areas of weaknesses of the child assigned.

A log was kept by the parent volunteer of the child's progress and activities during each session. This log was given to the classroom teacher at the end of the year.

The "Bucket Brigade" is one of the best ways to involve parents in a school program. It helps to build a better understanding by the parents of school problems. The children enjoyed working with the volunteers and greatly benefitted from the program. This gave the parent volunteers a feeling of achievement and pride. Thus, the rapport between school and home was enhanced and strengthened.

While the program was a success, there are a few areas which need improvement. Teachers should be included in the volunteer

inservice training sessions concerning the contents of the Bucket and the Manual. The teacher will then have a concrete idea of what sort of activities the volunteer can do. Also, before the volunteer begins to tutor a child, it would be helpful to have a teacher-volunteer conference about the child. The more the volunteer knows about the student the easier it will be for said volunteer to plan suitable activities. A liaison person should be available to consult with the parent volunteer on a regular basis. Duties of this person should include: answering questions, giving recommendations concerning student progress, encouraging and praising the volunteer in the work he or she is doing.

Bucket is filled with materials such as:

rulers - metric sticks

counting tools

books: texts & recreational

.....

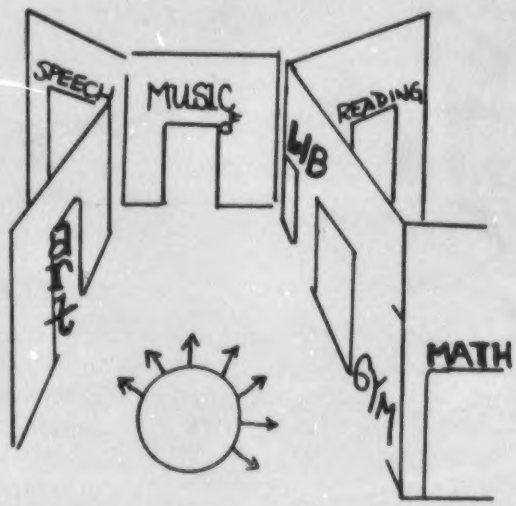
SCHEDULING

Scheduling was one of the key elements in establishing the academic structure behind the Erie Urban Network School Project. At Burton School a wide range of reading and math levels and numerous curricular activities made it very difficult to give the necessary individual attention to which the teacher felt the child was entitled. In order to alleviate the situation we called upon the Task Force for aid in scheduling as they were familiar with varied plans which they had implemented in the Model Schools. Discussion led to the development of large time blocks to be followed on a school wide basis.

Language Arts	8:50 - 10:30
Communications	10:30 - 12:00
Math	12:00 - 1:45
Social Science and Science	1:45 - 2:30

At this point the teachers compiled lists of their reading and math groups according to levels. These lists were given to the scheduling committee. This committee worked many long hours and came up with a workable schedule whereby numbers of students were reduced during the reading and math blocks through effective use of our full time specialists. Cross grading was attempted the first year with the exclusion of first grade which remained self-contained. It was felt that first graders needed the security of a more struc-

tured situation. However, first graders were scheduled into art, music, gym and library. Cross-grading allowed for the child to proceed at his level of ability rather than his grade level. After practical application, we were aware that some fourth grade children who were on a second grade level were sensitive to being placed in a second grade reading or math group. The following year, since there were four classes each of our second, third and fourth grades, students were cross-classed, with allowances for the exceptional child. This procedure still maintained the students ability level and alleviated any emotional strain.



The Master Schedule was designed so that class groups were scheduled into art, music, library and gym. Developmental Specialists (Reading, Math, Speech) scheduled their groups after the master schedule was completed. If class size was not reduced at a particular time through the use of specialists, an aide was provided for the teacher's utilization.

It was determined that for effective programs, art would require a 45 minute block of time; however, gym, music, and library would require 30 minutes. Consequently, 15 minute time blocks were established. Three time blocks were designated to art and two to music, gym and library. The specialists would then receive an integrated group from three different classroom teachers. This would given them

class sizes of 23 to 30 students. Art was limited to two groups as the process and tools would not permit groups of more than 25.

It was decided that gym and music could service the entire building in the morning. In order to reduce class size during the p.m. math block, students were scheduled into an additional music or gym period on an alternating week basis.

Friday afternoons were not included in the scheduling as this time was reserved for mini-courses. Specialists participated in these courses enabling us to have a broader selection of activities.

Once the master scheduling was completed, each teacher received a copy of his or her own class schedule and the students received their own individual schedule. Specialists also received a list of their class times.

The first week of scheduling we worked with bells and roll-call. All of the staff supervised the movement through the halls. Within several weeks it was functioning smoothly and the schedule was second nature to all.

This scheduling process will be expanded to the other two public schools in the project during the '75-'76 school year.

COLLEGE PROGRAM

Under the leadership of Dr. Barbara Weigart and Mr. Peter Libra of Mercyhurst College, a unique program was designed to mutually benefit students in the college program and at Burton and Mount Calvary Schools. This program provided college juniors with an opportunity to participate in a continuous educational experience beginning with individual or small group tutoring and culminating in the student teaching practicum.

Initially the college students became involved in the mathematics and science curriculum. Later the Language Arts area was added to broaden the scope of their experience. The students' responsibilities gradually increased to include more large group instruction during the twenty-eight week program.

While the collegiates benefited greatly from their continual involvement in our classrooms, the primary objectives of the college program was to further enhance the individualized program for our students. Implementation of this model permitted greater reduction in class size. An additional bonus was the transmission of techniques and ideas concerning urban education from the college professor to the classroom instructor through the teacher trainee.

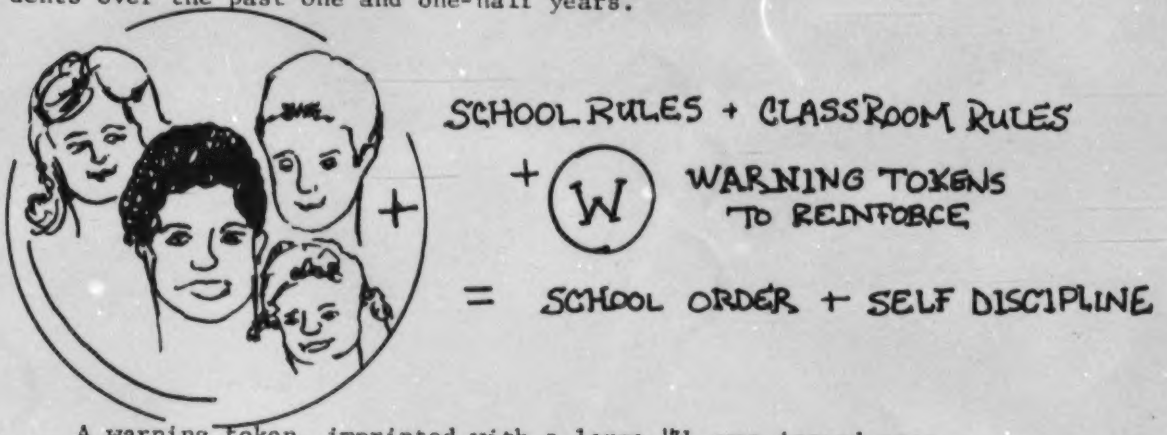
DISCIPLINE PROGRAM

Although the Burton School staff has found its students to be enthusiastic, interested and friendly; its concern has been the inability of the students to exercise self-control. To assist the children in maintaining appropriate school behavior, the staff was forced to assume complete control and rigidly structure classroom and school activities. However, once the external pressures and controls were withdrawn, a majority of the students still lacked the self discipline to continue the desired behaviors.

How does a school staff insure that "kids" will assume responsibility for their own behavior without external controls? This became our goal.

Our consultant, Dr. Ted Urban, aided in devising a plan of action. The teachers with input from the students, established school rules in each classroom. These rules were then restructured into a unified building code to encourage consistent behavior throughout the school. This plan, emphasizing external control by the staff similar to parental controls used at home would be effective at the start. To bring permanent changes, the children would have to develop pride in themselves and their school, and become aware of the value of good behavior. Posters, charts and individual copies of the rules were produced and displayed to familiarize and remind children of their responsibilities in regard to school conduct. Copies of these rules were sent home to the parents. This system of behavior

management was further developed and revised by the staff and students over the past one and one-half years.



A warning token, imprinted with a large "W, was issued as a tangible deterrent to students breaking any rules. Upon receiving one of these tokens, a child was sent to a "Time out" area to contemplate and arrive at a practical solution to his unacceptable behavior. "Time out" areas were limited spaces in each room used for the sole purpose of exclusion from the peer group and classroom activities.

If a child received two tokens for the same offense, he was sent to the office. At this time similar techniques were employed by the principal and counselor to confront the child with his offense and help him to structure a solution to the behavior problem. In cases where the child was frequently violating the rules, the child's parents were contacted to discuss the child's behavior and develop appropriate strategies involving child, parent, and staff.

Phase Two of the discipline plan was put into operation. The negative behavior had been diminished by the implementation of the

warning token system, but desirable behavior would only continue if the children developed an insight into the effectiveness of their proper behaviors. Strict enforcement of school rules and punishment for violations would not nurture self-control in children. For the children to retain positive gains and to maintain responsibility for their own behavior, positive reinforcement became the major thrust of the discipline plan.

With the assistance of Dr. Urban, techniques for positive reinforcement of acceptable school and classroom behaviors were developed at inservice meetings. Ways to reinforce children for appropriate actions were initiated and disseminated. To counteract the negative effects of the warning tokens, such things as smiles, pats, touches, stickers, good work awards, hugs, free-time and compliments, were suggested to be used to reinforce good behaviors.

Although in theory this plan appeared sound and workable, problems have sprung up. First, due to the expansiveness of the building, violations in the "neutral zones" (halls, playgrounds, lunch room, etc.) were often overlooked. In the design of the program a staff member was expected to escort violators with their tokens to their classrooms. Since this mandated leaving their classrooms unattended, minor violations were not enforced.

A second problem has been the decision of the staff to become more involved in other project activities leaving less time to follow through on proper discipline procedures.

As stated previously, the use of warning tokens eventually becomes ineffective if not replaced by positive reinforcement. Since the staff was slow to move into this activity, some children became apathetic about receiving tokens.

The consensus of the Burton staff is that the discipline program has worth and the weaknesses can be overcome. Basically, this procedure provides a more human approach. It has proved to them that this system takes much time and energy, but that the program can be effective if used in a consistent manner and given support by the entire staff.

INTERSTATE CONFERENCES

Another phase of the Erie Urban Network School Project was the Network School Conferences which enabled us to gather information and ideas from other schools. The first of these was a trip to New Castle, Pa. to attend a lecture given by Dr. William Glasser, at the Benjamin Franklin Auditorium, pertaining to his philosophy of Schools Without Failure. Dr. Glasser has set forth his philosophy in a book by the same title. This was followed by a visit to a school where Dr. Glasser's theory was being implemented. A summary of the program was presented to the Burton faculty with the possibility that we might incorporate this theory into our learning program.

The next Interstate Urban Network School Conference was held in New York City. Inner City Schools in the Bronx area were visited primarily for their reading and bi-lingual programs. Some of the information that was disseminated among the teachers was the manner in which they scheduled their specialists into their language arts block. This alleviated the large groups and gave more individual attention to the childrens' needs. This particular program was carried out at P.S. 31. In another school parents had become involved in a most unusual manner. Because 85% of the children were Spanish speaking, the parents brought them to school but were afraid to leave them alone. To prevent any problems from arising and to keep the learning program running smoothly, the parents were provided with a

community room where they could remain for the day. Eventually, from this evolved a unique sharing experience wherein the teachers were taught to speak Spanish by the parents and the parents in turn were taught English by the teachers. Other schools visited were secondary and for the most part pertained to the inception of the bi-lingual program.

In the spring another group of teachers went to the Network Conference in Philadelphia. This conference dealt primarily with the subject of math. Many ideas for packets, games, and learning centers were provided at a math workshop. In addition to the workshop, teachers were afforded the opportunity once again to visit two schools of their choice in the inner-city area. One of these schools was the Durham Child Development Center which was unique in that it was a non-graded school serving the educational experience for infants, children and adults ranging in age from two weeks to eighty years. Primarily, it served the neighborhood, but others could make application to attend and were accepted only if there were vacancies. This school had a fantastic material production center where teachers, parents, and students could go for ideas and materials. Another, the Conwell Middle Magnet School, had children bussed as a means of integration. Business and professionals were involved with the school to such a degree that in some cases the learning situation was on a one to one basis. The Welsh School was more traditionally structured in order to cope with former discipline problems that had previously prevailed. This was considered to be a

"gang area". The enrollment consisted of 67% Puerto Ricans, 32% Black, and 1% White.

The Washington, D.C. conference of Interstate Urban Network Schools was held January 15-17, 1975. This conference was a forum for exchanging ideas. Included were meetings with legislators and U.S. Office of Education representatives.

The primary concerns of the educators were that the financial support for urban schools was being curtailed at a time when it needed to be expanded. Local districts are unable to cover the costs of equitable educational opportunities for all children. Urban areas must be given top priority in a reallocation of funds. We were informed of the amendment to the School Education Act of 1974 to release monies for urban education. The legislators also recommended checking the Federal Register and notifying project directors of items of interest. They stated that each local district is entitled to apply for funds for improvements under Title V.

In the spring of 1975 the Erie Urban Network School Project was selected as an outstanding Title III Project. We were invited to attend the Educational Fair sponsored by the Department of Education and R.I.S.E. (Research and Information Services for Education). Here we had the opportunity to view other Title III projects, attend presentations, and talk about our project to others.

The teachers who attended these conferences found the experiences invaluable. Being able to talk with teachers and administrators of other districts, viewing or seeing their programs in operation, gave

the conferees enthusiasm for making changes in their home schools.

It was felt that more Erie teacher participation in these conferences would greatly benefit the whole Erie City School System.

TESTING PROGRAM

SELECTION OF TEST

Burton, Jones, and Penn Schools

The Stanford Achievement Test, 1964 edition, was selected as the evaluation instrument for the Erie Urban Network School Project. Paragraph Meaning and Arithmetic Computation were the two sub-tests administered in all grades except first grade. The primary measure of academic progress in the Erie School District is the S.A.T., 1974 edition. At the outset of the Urban Project (9-73) the 1964 edition was being used; therefore, to insure an accurate and reliable comparison, the "project" continued to use this edition instead of changing to the revised edition.

Mount Calvary School

The Stanford Achievement Test was administered to students in the lower grades and the Metropolitan Achievement Test was given to the children in the upper grades.

ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS

Burton and Mount Calvary Schools

Pre-Testing: November 1973

Post-Testing: First Year - May 1974

Second Year - May 1975

Jones and Penn Schools

Pre-Testing: November 1973

Post-Testing: May 1975

TEST SCORES

All scores are reported in grade equivalents. The mean score for each grade of every project school is listed in the printed tables.

For comparison purposes, the expected average or median achievement test score for each grade should be as follows:

.3 for 11/73 testing (2.3, 3.3, 4.3)

.9 for 5/74 testing (2.9, 3.9, 4.9)

.9 for 5/75 testing (2.9, 3.9, 4.9)

See test tables on the following pages.

TABLES

BURTON

		READING			ARITHMETIC		
GRADE	NO.	11-73	5-74	5-75	11-73	5-74	5-75
2	96	—	—	2.33	—	—	2.38
3	103	1.85	2.43	2.98	1.94	2.35	3.27
4	108	2.49	2.89	3.64	2.73	3.06	3.61

MOUNT CALVARY

		READING			ARITHMETIC		
GRADE	NO.	11-73	5-74	5-75	11-73	5-74	5-75
2	15	—	2.97	3.46	—	2.49	3.33
3	25	3.04	3.67	4.73	2.50	3.06	4.54
4	23	4.18	5.28	5.57	3.22	4.30	5.76
5	16	5.56	5.90	7.78	4.61	5.72	6.23
6	21	6.76	6.64	8.17	5.27	5.87	8.63
7	28	6.34	7.75	8.05	6.67	7.56	8.18
8	25	7.77	8.78	10.30	7.59	8.61	11.51

JONES

		READING			ARITHMETIC		
GRADE	NO.	11-73	5-74	5-75	11-73	5-74	5-75
2	21	—	—	2.37	—	—	2.41
3	37	2.01	—	3.06	2.24	—	3.24
4	26	2.07	—	3.86	2.21	—	3.91
5	23	3.04	—	4.56	3.34	—	4.58
6	18	3.60	—	5.79	3.85	—	5.48

PENN

		READING			ARITHMETIC		
GRADE	NO.	11-73	5-74	5-75	11-73	5-74	5-75
2	23	—	—	1.96	—	—	2.17
3	26	1.79	—	3.06	2.77	—	3.36
4	37	3.25	—	3.39	3.57	—	3.98
5	34	3.73	—	5.06	3.63	—	5.39
6	23	4.18	—	5.30	3.88	—	5.55

TEST RESULTS

BURTON SCHOOL: Generally the results for reading and arithmetic can be described as below average with the lower scores in reading. In grade two the children have fallen behind by one-half year. By the time they complete grade four the mean scores are more than a full year behind.

MOUNT CALVARY: Overall, the test results indicate the Mount Calvary students are achieving above average grade levels in reading. In the lower elementary grades achievement in both academic subjects are equivalent, but the arithmetic scores are higher in the upper grades. The mean scores are one-half to a full year above expected scores in grades two, three and four. The scores in grades five, six, seven and eight are at least one full year above expected scores and at times approach two full years.

JONES SCHOOL: A summary of the test results show that the Jones students are achieving at below grade levels in reading and arithmetic with little significant differences. The mean scores in grade two have the students one-half year below grade levels. When they have finished grade six, their scores exceed one full year below expected grade levels.

PENN SCHOOL: A resume of the test scores indicate that Penn students are also achieving below grade levels in reading and arithmetic, with the arithmetic scores slightly higher than reading in every grade. At the end of grades two and three the mean scores are three-fourths of a year under expected grade levels. By the completion of grade six the scores have fallen to more than a full

year below grade levels.

EVALUATION

BURTON SCHOOL: A study of the achievement test scores of Burton students for the preceding seven years predict that the mean scores for reading and arithmetic will grow by five-tenths to six-tenths of a year during each academic year. The results of the May 1975 post-testing indicate that the students have progressed at a slightly faster annual growth rate during the past two years. The annual growth rate for the Burton students was between six-tenths to seven-tenths of a year. These figures indicate that a gradual decline in mean scores for all grades has finally "bottomed out" and a positive reversal trend begun.

POTENTIAL

The SRA Primary Mental Abilities Test is administered to all Kindergarten, grade three and grade five students in the Erie Public Schools. The findings of these evaluations show the mean I.Q. scores for Burton and Penn students to be slightly below one hundred and for Jones students to be slightly above one hundred. No ability scores were available for Mount Calvary students.

A comparison of these scores with students from the School District of the City of Erie and nationwide would predict that the Erie Urban Network Project pupils would be expected to perform significantly below other district and national students.

CONCLUSION

During our first two years, mini-courses, scheduling, Bucket Brigade and various other aspects of the program have made us look enthusiastically forward to our third year. Effective communication among the teachers, parents, and students, fostered an improved attitude. Social improvement of the students was displayed in their interaction with the teachers and their peers.

Although we often encountered failures, this did not discourage us. The reinforcement of many continuing successes stimulated us to refine our program around the changing needs of our students and staff.